

MEMORANDUM

On the organization of a research group:

CENTER FOR THE STUDY OF PENITENTIARY SYSTEMS UNDER DICTATORSHIPS

WHEREAS:

1. The ruthless political repression of dissident opinion in the Soviet Union and other major dictatorships poses a threat to the security of all free countries;
2. Very little is known in the free world about the scope and nature of these repressive regimes;
3. Problems concerning forced labor camps and special prisons for political dissidents under dictatorships have not been studied professionally. Consequently, people of the world and human rights organizations are not informed of the conditions in which prisoners are being held (their food, clothing, work, regulations governing correspondence, and meetings with relatives, forms of punishment within the prisons, daily schedule, coercive measures, methods of sowing dissension among prisoners, etc.);
4. Voluntary social organizations in various countries are attempting to collect information on prisoners, but are doing this unprofessionally, unsystematically, and on the basis of their interest in individuals of a particular nationality: Russians, Ukrainians, Tartars, Poles, Czechs, Jews, etc. As a result, the data collected by these organizations are criticized for nonobjectivity.
5. There exists no complete catalogue of all prisoners being held under dictatorships, and even their number is unknown;
6. There exists no catalogue of photographs of imprisoned dissidents;
7. There is not a single catalogue of the addresses of the imprisoned political dissidents' families;

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8. There exists no map showing the locations of labor camps and prisons.  
There is no monitoring of the creation of new incarceration facilities;
  9. No investigation is being conducted on changing conditions within political prisons (decrease in food rations, the number of prisoners inhabiting each barrack or cell, conditions relating to correspondence and meetings with relatives);
  10. There exists no record of official testimonies from witnesses who were imprisoned under dictatorships;
  11. Special psychiatric prisons and camps for criminal offenders are not being studied for their use as imprisonment facilities for political dissidents;
  12. A wealth of information about conditions in the Soviet Union and other totalitarian countries is potentially available. But this information cannot be developed unless there exists an apparatus that can systematically debrief all of those who have emerged or will emerge from the concentration camps and political prisons and can collate and organize all of the information reaching the free world via legal and illegal channels;
  13. The organization and publication of this information would put the Soviet Government and other governments under pressure to abandon their more repressive practices, and in this way would contribute to the security of the free world and to world peace.

Based on the above, we propose the following:

1. The creation at some university or law school of a special research center of qualified persons for the scientific collection of all data concerning the present situation of political dissidents in the prisons, labor camps and other places of incarceration under dictatorships. Such a center should initially be composed of not more than five researchers and two technical assistants;

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2. Cooperation of this Center with all organizations of the world interested in aiding political dissidents in prisons under dictatorships;
3. Publication by the Center of a monthly bulletin of new information concerning the current situation of incarcerated political prisoners.